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A Group of Theatrical Caricatures

BEING TWELVE PLATES BY

W. J. GLADDING

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND BIOGRAPHICAL
SKETCHES BY

LOUIS EVAN SHIPMAN



Publications of The Dunlap Society. New Series No. 4.

New York, 1897.

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NEW YORK
THE DUNLAP SOCIETY
1897

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INTRODUCTION.

IF it were the intention of this introduction to trace the story of caricature back through the middle ages to its primal origin, as some claim, on the papyri of the Egyptians, it would lose much of the brevity that has been planned for it and serve but little purpose. For those who want a history of caricature there are numberless Encyclopedias of art. This little foreword is merely to introduce the twelve caricatures that form the chief interest of this publication of the Dunlap Society, and to give their short history as it is known to me.

In 1868, a Mr. W. J. Gladding, then an assistant in the famous Fredericks photographic gallery, drew the caricatures for Colonel T. Allston Brown, in whose possession they remained for twenty-two years. He disposed of them to a dealer in theatrical curiosities named Walsh, from whom I purchased them in 1892; that is, I purchased eleven of them—the one of Florence as *Bob Brierly* was missing—and for that matter is missing to-day, but, curiously enough, Mr. Evert Jansen Wendell, who now has the original eleven, picked up a photograph of the missing one,

and in that way made it possible to present the complete group of plates.

It is needless to say that they have little if any artistic quality, but they are valuable and interesting in as far as they give the likeness and characteristics of their originals, and this they do surprisingly.

The rarity of theatrical caricatures is really astonishing when one considers the numberless photographs, engravings, sketches, and paintings there are of actors, but few even of the largest dramatic collections have anything of the sort, and one has to arrive at the conclusion that actors have comparatively been very seldom caricatured. Whether this is because they are in a way caricaturists themselves I don't know; it seems plausible enough, but the fact nevertheless remains, and I think the members of the Dunlap Society, in having these presented to them, can congratulate themselves on the possession of an altogether unique collection of plates.

In the little biographical sketches that accompany them I have aimed at no particular completeness, dwelling only on those incidents which seemed more important, and on occasion giving some reminiscence or anecdote that might lay claim to novelty or especial interest. I commend them to the leniency of all students of our stage history. To others they may furnish their own excuse for being.

LOUIS EVAN SHIPMAN.

THE PLAYERS, NOVEMBER, 1897.

NEW YORK

1855



ANALYSIS

John Brougham.



JOHN BROUGHAM.

JOHN BROUGHAM.

FOR nearly forty years, as actor, manager, and playwright, John Brougham, save for the period covering the Civil War, which was spent in London, was constantly before the New York public, a public nowhere near so vast and conglomerate as that which supports the play-houses of to-day, and whose relations with its entertainers was therefore of a much more intimate and personal character. And even in those days when stage favorites were favorites indeed, Brougham seems to have been singled out for particular approval. Born in Dublin in 1810, of gentle family, he followed the path of most Irish young gentlemen, prepared for and entered Trinity College, and afterward studied medicine. The insidious influence of private theatricals was too much for him, however, and he journeyed to London intent on entering the "profession," which he did in 1830. His experiences for ten years in and out of London were varied and valuable, from playing small parts under Madame Vestris at the Olympic, and later with Charles Mathews at Covent Garden, to the management of the Lyceum, which resulted disastrously, as did all his future mana-

gerial attempts, and from the writing of numberless, now forgotten farces and burlesques, to collaboration with Mark Lemon and Dion Boucicault. Indeed, we have very good authority for the statement that he suggested the idea of "London Assurance" to Boucicault, receiving half the sum paid for the piece.

His first appearance in New York was at the old Park Theater, and with the exception of the interim I have mentioned the rest of his life was spent here. There is no need to record the story of his career in New York: older members of the Dunlap Society are familiar with it, and it is easily accessible to the younger through Dr. Benjamin Ellis Martin's admirable little biography in the "Actors and Actors of Great Britain and America" series.

John Brougham was among the last of a group of Irishmen on the stage that for personal charm, grace, and humor, we will probably never see equaled. Tyrone Power, John Drew, W. J. Florence, and John Brougham are only names now, but the memory of them brings smiles and tears to the old playgoer's face; what have we youngsters to look forward to?

In conclusion, I have thought it would be of interest to quote the lines on tobacco from his most amusing burlesque "Pocahontas" and the vision of the new world from his "Columbus."

The first he delivered in the character of "*H. J. Powhatan I*, King of the Tuscaroras—a crotchety monarch, in fact a semi-brave." It is in this part that the accompanying caricature represents him. The apostrophe to the pipe is this:

While other joys one sense alone can measure
 This to all senses gives extatic pleasure.
 You *feel* the radiance of the glowing bowl,
 Hear the soft murmurs of the kindling coal,
 Smell the sweet fragrance of the honey-dew,
 Taste its strong pungency the palate through,
 See the blue cloudlets circling to the dome
 Imprisoned skies up floating to their home.

As *Don Christoval Colon*, alias *Columbus*,—a clairvoyant voyager whose filibustering expedition gave rise at the time to a world of speculation,—he delivered the following, the king serving as a “feeder.”

King. Just as sure as fate
 He 's in a beautiful clairvoyant state!
 Columbus! Why are you in such amaze?
Col. Time onward passes, and my mental gaze
 Is on the future, lo! I see a land
 Where nature seems to frame with practised hand
 Her last most wonderous work! before me rise
 Mountains of solid rock that rift the skies,—
 Imperial vallies with rich verdure crowned
 For leagues illimitable smile around,
 While through them subject seas for rivers run
 From ice bound tracts to where the tropic sun
 Breeds in the teeming ooze strange monstrous things —
 I see upswelling from exhaustless springs,
 Great lakes appear upon whose surface wide
 The banded navies of the earth may ride,
 I see tremendous cataracts emerge
 From cloud aspiring heights, whose slippery verge
 Tremendous oceans momentarily roll o'er,
 Assaulting with unmitigated roar
 The stunned and shattered ear of trembling day
 That wounded, weeps in glistening tears of spray!
King. We grieve your sensibility to shock,

- See something else or down will go our stock.
- Col.* I see upspringing from the fruitful breast
Of the beneficent and boundless West,
Uncounted acres of life-giving grain,
Wave o'er the gently undulating plain,
So tall each blade that you can scarcely touch
The top!
- King.* Ah! now, my blade, you see too much.
- Col.* Within the limits of the southern zone
I see plantations, thickly overgrown
With a small shrub in whose white flower lies
A revenue of millions!
- King.* You surprise
Us now, we'll cotton to that tree!
Go on, old fellow, what else do you see?
- Col.* Some withered weeds—
- King.* Pooh!
- Col.* From which men can evoke
Profit as wonderful!
- King.* From what?
- Col.* From smoke.
- King.* Ah, now you're in the clouds again. Good gracious!
Think of the stock, and don't be so fugacious.
- Col.* I see a river, through whose limpid stream,
Pactolus like, the yellow pebbles gleam;
Flowing through regions, where great heaps of gold,
Uncared for, lie in affluence untold,
Thick as autumnal leaves, the precious store.
- King.* My eyes! why did n't you see that before?
We'll go ourself, we mean we shall "go in."
Go on.
- Col.* I see small villages begin,
Like twilight stars, to peep forth timidly,
Great distances apart; and now I see
Towns, swol'n to cities, burst upon the sight,
Thick as the crowded firmament at night.
I see brave science, with inspired soul,

Subdue the elements to its control ;
 On iron ways, through rock and mountain riven,
 Impelling mighty freights, by vapor driven ;
 Or with electric nerves so interlace
 The varied points of universal space.
 Thought answers thought, though scores of miles between —
 Time is outstripped —

King. We 're not so jolly green.
 My friend, come, ain't you getting rather steep ?
 We beg to probability you 'll keep.
 What see you now ?

Col. The plethora of wealth
 Corrupt and undermine the general health.
 I see vile madd'ning fumes incite to strife,
 Obscure the sense and whet the murderer's knife.
 I see dead rabbits —

which goes to show that Brougham, with all his fooling, had something of the prophet in him too.

Eventually *Columbus* sets out on his perilous voyage but is endangered by the mutiny of his sailors. *Columbia* very opportunely appears and quells them as follows :

Enter COLUMBIA.

Colum. She 's here !

[*Sailors shrink back in affright.*

Col. I 'm saved !

Colum. What means this horrid din ?
 If it 's a free fight, you can count me in !
 So many against one, now understand
 To aid the weak I 'll always be on hand !

Sancho. "The Empire Club.
"The owner fitly will reward the finders
"If it 's returned —"

All. To whom?

Sancho. "To Marshall Rynders."

[*A Play-Bill is fished up.*

All. What 's this?

Colum. A bill of Burton's Theatre, you noodles!

Col. What are they doing now there?

Colum. "Sleek and Toodles."

Col. I hear the birds.

Colum. They 're cat-birds if you do.

Col. The cat-bird's song must be "the wild sea-mew,"
There 's music somewhere nigh.

Colum. Don't be emphatic,
It 's Dodworth's band on board the Adriatic,
She 'll pass us soon upon her trial trip,
Look at her well, Columbus, such a ship
You never saw — and never will, I swow,
Unless he dream it, as he 's doing now.

[*The Adriatic passes across, the Band playing "Yankee Doodle."*

Colum. See where she steams majestically down.

Sancho. My eyes and limbs, why, it 's a floating town!

Col. Right against wind and tide and not a sail,
The Flying Dutchman, that is, without fail:
Hurrah! look there, I 'll take my oath I spy land!

Colum. Of course you do.

Col. What is it?

Colum. Coney Island!

[*All the sailors cluster around Columbus.*

Sancho. Oh, glorious admiral, upon our knees
We ask forgiveness —

Col. See what men are these
Attired in such extraordinary style?

Colum. They are the magnates of Manhatta's Isle.
Every distinguished guest they're bound to meet
And feed — Don't fear, they can afford to treat,
For hospitality 's a public trait,
Therefore the public can't object to pay.

These are but specimens of Brougham's fooling,
taken at random. There are hundreds of others
equally good, and it seems to me they might well
bear resuscitation.

John Lester Wallack.



JOHN LESTER WALLACK.

JOHN LESTER WALLACK.

THERE is no name more intimately or more proudly connected with the American stage than that of Wallack. From the year 1818, when the elder Wallack, James William, made his first appearance in America at the Park Theater, down to the present time, the Wallack family has been represented on the play-bills of our theaters almost continuously. It was only yesterday that I saw on a Philadelphia bill of a play called "A Ward of France," the name of Lester Wallack, the grandson of the subject of this little sketch.

John Johnstone Wallack, or, as most of his biographers have it, John Lester Wallack, was born in New York in the year 1820, on the first visit of his father and mother to this country. He was taken back to England while still an infant, and his childhood and youth were passed in that country; the effects of the training and associations of his early life were very marked always, and his extreme partiality for persons and things English was always noticeable.

He was intended for the army, but the family tradition pushed aside all thought of arms as a profession,

and he commenced his apprenticeship by the usual provincial routine, which finally, in 1846, led to a London engagement at the Haymarket, under Webster's management. It was in the next year that he made his first appearance in New York at the old Broadway Theater, in the character of *Sir Charles Coldstream* in "Used Up." Then, and for years after, in fact until the opening of the second Wallack's Theater — what is now the Star — in 1861, his name appeared on all bills as "Mr. Lester." And for the next six years this "Mr. Lester," now at the Bowery, next at Burton's, then at Niblo's, and almost every other theater in the town, began to build the reputation that will carry his name forward in dramatic annals as one of the most charming, dashing, and facile comedians that ever graced the stage.

In 1852 his father opened the first Wallack's Theater, at Broadway and Broome Street, and he joined his fortunes with the house that eventually became so closely identified with himself. Here for nine years he ranged through comedy, farce, and melodrama, even trying his hand at dramatization with no little success. His best known and most successful play, "Rosedale," was produced after the move from Broome Street to Thirteenth Street and Broadway, which took place in 1861. I had the pleasure once, when a lad of fifteen or sixteen, of seeing him as *Elliot Gray* in that play, and I still have a vivid impression of the gallant, comely figure he made. The good fortune was mine, too, to see him several times later, and I particularly remember him as *Young Marlow* in "She

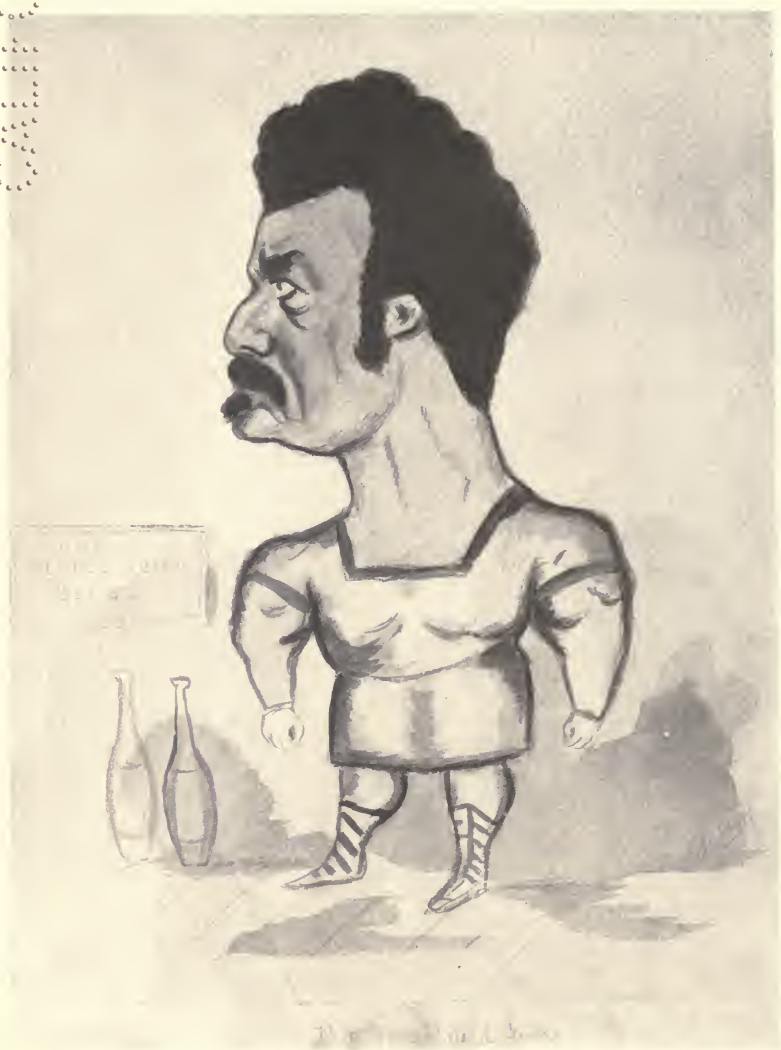
Stoops to Conquer," and as *Colonel White* in "Home." Always delightfully cool and self-possessed, with the well-bred, well-poised manner of the experienced gentleman, it causes no wonder, as one reads now, that he was the idol of the town. His father dying in 1864, the management of the theater devolved upon him, and for nearly twenty years he bent his best energies to giving the public a theater that was a credit to its intelligence and taste. There was no place for the speculative manager in those days: he is a modern product, and the worst I can say of him is that the modern playgoer deserves him! Lester Wallack lived to see the new order of things, but as long as his hand was at the managerial helm, there was no lowering of standards.

On January 4, 1882, Wallack's made its last move to the corner of Thirtieth Street and Broadway. Lester Wallack retained the management until 1887, acting occasionally there, but more frequently "starring" in other cities. His last appearance as an actor was May 29, 1886, at the Grand Opera House, over on Twenty-third Street and Eighth Avenue. He played *Young Marlow* with John Gilbert and Madame Ponisi as *Mr. and Mrs. Hardcastle*. Two years later, on the night of May 21, after a most wonderful performance of "Hamlet," given by his fellow-players in his honor, he made the last speech the public—his public—were ever to hear. I can remember now the erect figure, with the almost leonine head covered with white, leaning slightly on the table at his side, and speaking the last words to the enormous audience

that was there to greet him. The occasion had more than ordinary significance: it was a visible passing of the old order of things dramatic, and the feeling with which he made his adieux was communicated to those who sat before him. They were not to look upon his like again. He died the following September.

Edwin Forrest.

1850



EDWIN FORREST.

EDWIN FORREST.

IF the reader will scrutinize the Forrest plate carefully, he will make out the dim penciled inscription underneath the figure. "The Great head Centre," it reads, and though written with comic intent, it serves admirably as a terse description of Forrest's position on the American stage. In his day he was "The Great head Centre."

He was born in Philadelphia in 1806, and when but a lad of fourteen made his first public appearance as *Young Norval* in "Douglas." The success of the boy was such that he was permitted to choose the stage as his profession, and while the drudgery of his novitiate was no less irksome to him than to the many others who have traveled the same path, yet recognition and success came to him earlier.

He played "Othello" at the Bowery Theater in 1826, and reached in one night the top round. His success was assured and fortune smiled upon him. In 1834 he went abroad and again in 1836, when his success in London in such characters as *Spartacus*, *Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Othello*, was extraordinary. It was during this visit to England that he became engaged to and married Miss Catherine Sinclair.

His return to America was made almost a matter of national importance and his tour of the principal cities was a triumphant progress of the nation's greatest actor. Then followed eight or nine years of uninterrupted prosperity, during which fortune kept pace with his fame. He went to London again in 1845, and there the clouds began to gather that eventually embittered and broke his life. On his opening night he was received with hisses, and a few nights later he was compelled to close his engagement.

Forrest furiously charged Macready, the great English actor, with this attempt to drive him from the London stage, and some weeks later took occasion to publicly show his feelings by hissing Macready during a performance of "Hamlet" in the provinces. This was the beginning of the quarrel that a few years later, in 1848, on the occasion of Macready's next visit to America, resulted so tragically.

From the first moment of the English actor's arrival theater-goers were divided into two hostile camps. Macready made foolish speeches before the curtain, and Forrest made bitter responses. It all culminated on the night of May 10, 1849, when Macready was playing in "Macbeth" at the Astor Place Opera House. The theater was surrounded by a howling, senseless mob, who almost demolished the building with a storm of missiles. The Seventh Regiment had been called out as a precautionary measure, and when the rioters were ordered to disperse, they turned furiously upon the troops and attacked them. Thirty of the rabble were killed, and many of the

soldiers were seriously hurt, among them Mr. Douglas Taylor, then a young private in the Seventh, now President of the Dunlap Society—a link with the past that serves wonderfully to keep alive the realization that this was all but yesterday. Macready escaped to Boston and returned to England, profoundly affected by the terrible ending of the petty quarrel, while Forrest was no less shocked at its fatal outcome.

Only a few years were to pass till the other great tragedy of Forrest's life, his divorce, took place. I mention it here simply because it was an extraordinary case, contested with great bitterness and determination on both sides, and resulting, as it did, disastrously to Forrest, who brought the original suit, had a tremendous influence over his future career. I go into no details, for they are given at length in Alger's admirable life. To Mrs. Forrest alone was granted a divorce, and the fees which Forrest was forced to pay amounted to nearly two hundred thousand dollars. His pride was somewhat assuaged, however, by the tremendous outburst of enthusiasm which everywhere greeted his return to the stage, but his spirit was never the same afterward.

He toured the country for several years, but eventually retired to his home in Philadelphia for a well-earned rest, and it was in an ill-advised moment that four years later he emerged into public once more. His success was enormous, and he played in "Hamlet," "Lear," "Othello," "Richard III," "The Gladiator," "Damon and Pythias," "Richelieu," "Jack Cade," "Virinius," and "Metamora" at Niblo's

Garden to a generation of theater-goers that knew him only by reputation; but already his wonderful powers were on the wane, and the succeeding years found them dwindling away, until there was but a spark of the old fire left when he made his last appearance as an actor in Boston at the Globe Theater, April 2, 1872. "Richelieu" was the play, and the curtain fell on the prophetic line: "So ends it."

He died on September 12th of the same year in Philadelphia. The Forrest Home for aged actors, in Philadelphia, which he amply endowed, is a memorial to the man's generosity. His genius as an actor is little more than a memory now. But it is a duty for all chroniclers of the American stage to pass on the tradition of his greatness. He was a great actor and worthy of that tradition.

Edwin Booth.



EDWIN BOOTH.

EDWIN BOOTH.

IT would seem that the last necessary word had been written about Edwin Booth. What with the ample and sympathetic "Life" by William Winter, and the reminiscences of various friends that have appeared in one form or another at different times recently, there seems little if anything left to say. And yet in this group of twelve, there is no man about whom it would give me such pleasure to write. I have distinct and vivid impressions of many of the occurrences of the last few years of his life, and I treasure immensely the remembrance of those last gentle months which he spent at the Players. Of course, I was but one of a mixed many that passed before him in those days, but I have the special memory of several anecdotal winter afternoons, spent, with only two or three others, in company with the Master. His favorite nook in the Players was a corner in the front of the reading-room, and there, ensconced in a huge grandfather chair, he spent many an afternoon in the winter of 1892-93; dropping at times into delightful reminiscence, and then again showing a lively interest in the events of the day. Always cheerful, simple, courteous, and

sympathetic, the brave gentleman, weighed with the burden of ill-health, won the affection of all who had the happy chance of knowing him. But I run far ahead of my story — or rather his — and I must give the full quota of biographical dates that is called for by a sketch of this sort, or be charged with neglect of duty.

Edwin Thomas Booth was born at Belair in Harford County, Maryland, in 1833. His father, Junius Brutus Booth, was one of the great tragedians of the early part of the century, being rivaled only by Kean himself. He was thirty-seven years old at the time of Edwin's birth, and at the height of his power and success. At a very early age Edwin became the companion of his father on the latter's professional tours about the country, and there grew up between the two an extraordinary attachment that had a lasting and important influence on the younger man's life. The somber, erratic genius of the father stamped itself on the impressionable and sympathetic boy, whose temperament and nature were much akin to his parent's.

When but sixteen years old he made his first appearance on the stage at the Boston Museum, playing *Tressel* to his father's *Richard III.*, and very successfully, too; and not very long afterward he played the part of *Richard* himself at the National Theater, New York.

In 1852 he was playing in California with his father, who shortly died, leaving Edwin and an older brother, Junius Brutus Booth, Jr., playing together in the West. They journeyed to the Sandwich Islands, and even as

far as Australia, then back again to California, steadily learning and improving in the actor's bitter school of experience. Boston was the scene of his first appearance as a "star." In the spring of 1857 he played *Sir Giles Overreach*, and was splendidly successful. The following month he played *Richard III.* at the Metropolitan Theater in New York, and there established himself as the coming tragedian. Forrest's star was on the wane; the elder Wallack was playing his farewell engagements, and there were no other rivals in the field, which was soon to be his alone, and over which he held undisputed sway for the rest of his life.

In 1860 he married Miss Mary Devlin, and in the following year made his first visit to England. Opening at the Haymarket in the "Merchant of Venice," he played a round of the stock characters, with but indifferent success, until at the end of his engagement "Richelieu" was produced. In that he made a decided impression, but he was unable to follow it up, as he was compelled to return to the States. His wife died in 1863, a tremendous blow that found its only alleviation in hard, all-engrossing work. He took a lease of the Winter Garden Theater in conjunction with his brother-in-law Clarke and William Stuart, and on November 26, 1864, the famous one hundred night run of "Hamlet" began. It was an artistic and complete production in every respect, and established Booth's position beyond cavil. After its finish in New York it was produced in Boston, but its run there was interrupted on April 14 by the great tragedy that threw the country into consternation and that for

the moment blotted out entirely Booth's career. It was on the night of April 14 that his brother John Wilkes Booth assassinated President Lincoln. I have heard a story, no doubt apocryphal, that it was the following morning before the news was brought to Edwin, and then in this way: His colored body-servant entered his room and asked, "Have you heard the news, Massa Edwin?" "What news?" "Mr. Lincoln has been murdered." "Murdered!" "Yes. Massa Wilkes shot him last night!" The story is brutal enough to be true, but, however the word was brought to him, he was overwhelmed by the calamity and retired from the stage.

His sensitive, almost morbid nature never recovered from that shock and the memory of it was always near the surface. I remember an incident that occurred in 1891, after almost thirty years, which illustrates this. A young man just elected to membership in the Players thought to show his appreciation of the honor by presenting some token or relic to the beloved founder of the club. He bought a play-bill of the performance which President Lincoln attended on the night of his assassination, and presented it to Mr. Booth one afternoon at the Players. The dear old gentleman after one glance at it turned pale, and in great agitation left the room. He was seen later in his apartments by one of his oldest friends, and he had somewhat recovered his equanimity, and with his gentleness and accustomed consideration for others he remarked: "I think I should take it as a compliment that the present generation seems to have forgotten entirely my connection with that bitter tragedy."

There is a little touch of irony in the fact that the young man's play-bill was a spurious one.

Mr. William Winter says that only necessity brought Booth back to the stage, and one can well believe it. He reappeared in New York at the Winter Garden in 1866, and received an ovation, and on his subsequent tour through the country he was greeted everywhere generously and cordially. But he never acted in Washington again. The Winter Garden was destroyed in 1867, but the following year, in April, saw the cornerstone laid for a new Booth's Theater at the corner of Twenty-third Street and Sixth Avenue. Nearly a million dollars was spent in its erection, and Booth devoted all his time, energy, and experience in its behalf. The most splendid productions of the standard drama ever seen in this country were given there, and the whole enterprise was dedicated to art. But either the time was not ripe for the enterprise, or else the business management was not what it should have been, and in 1874 the theater which he had given the best in him to found passed out of his hands.

Mr. Winter quotes from a manuscript note of Booth's referring to his non-success: "I had no desire for gain. My only hope was to establish the pure, legitimate drama in New York, and by my example to incite others, actors and managers, to continue the good work." A Utopian dream, as far, if not further, from realization in our day than it was in his.

In 1869 Booth married Miss Mary McVickar, who, as Mr. Winter says, was "remarkable for practical administrative ability in the affairs of business and so-

cial life, rather than for conspicuous talent in acting. She possessed neither the figure, the countenance, the voice, nor the personal charm that are essential for great success upon the stage, and her acting, although intelligent, was devoid of both tenderness and power. She acted all along the range, from *Lady Macbeth* to *Ophelia*." Mrs. Booth lived for twelve years after her marriage, dying in 1881.

Booth never attempted management again; the rest of his career he entrusted himself to the management of others. He went to England in 1880 and had a moderately successful engagement in London, winding up with a few joint performances with Henry Irving at the Lyceum, Booth playing *Othello*, Irving *Iago*, and Miss Terry *Desdemona*. For this engagement the prices of the theater were doubled, and the Lyceum was packed night after night. Too much cannot be said in praise of Mr. Irving's generosity and thoughtfulness toward his brother artist. And it is a satisfaction to know that Americans have never forgotten it. Again in 1882 he played in London and the provinces, and in January, 1883, he appeared at the Resedenz Theater in Berlin. His success there was followed by similar successes in the smaller German cities, and also in Vienna. He returned home in the summer of that year and never again ventured abroad, though he often said his visit to Germany was one of the most delightful episodes of his life.

The next ten years were given up to starring tours about the country, with occasional intermissions for rest. In 1885 he played in New York with Ristori,

and in 1886 he and Salvini acted together. The following year he joined his fortunes with Mr. Lawrence Barrett, and under the management of that intelligent actor the combination thrived to a very extraordinary degree, and Booth's share of the profits was a nucleus for the considerable fortune that he left at the time of his death.

Mr. Barrett died suddenly in 1891, and on April 4 of that year Booth made his last appearance on the stage in the Brooklyn Academy of Music. The play was "Hamlet," and though there was no announcement that it was to be his last performance, the theater was packed with an audience that showed keenly how impressive the occasion was. I shall never forget how we hung on the great actor's every word, and watched his every movement. His *Hamlet*, always an exquisitely beautiful performance, clear, simple, and wonderfully dignified, was never given with finer feeling or better effect. He was called time and again after the final fall of the curtain, and was forced at last to make a little speech. In the streets a crowd that completely filled the street had massed itself to witness his departure from the theater, and there were loud cheers as he drove away.

His health never permitted him to act again, and the two years that remained to him were spent mostly at his apartments in the Players, that monument to his generosity and thoughtfulness for which men of all arts and professions have to be thankful. There, surrounded by many old friends, he passed his last days, happy in the prosperity of the club which he had

founded, and to the end taking an active interest in its affairs.

He died in his apartments there, June 8, 1893, and was buried in the beautiful Mount Auburn Cemetery at Cambridge, Mass. More versatile actors may have lived, but never a greater.

William I. Florence.



WILLIAM J. FLORENCE.

WILLIAM J. FLORENCE.

FLORENCE was one of the last of the old-school comedians, and he was one of the best. I should rank him not one whit below Jefferson, and in so doing would honor him no less than Jefferson, whose professional companion he was during the last seasons of his professional career. The present generation of theater-goers should be thankful for the memory of his *Sir Lucius O'Trigger* (one of the most charming and delightful performances I ever saw, full of elegance, dash, and humor); and if some years before they were in the theater when they should have been at home abed, they will have youthful remembrance of his *Captain Cuttle*, *Bardwell Slote*, and *Obenreizer*. I have such a remembrance, and treasure it, though it is a rather vague one — none the less so as I looked upon stage happenings in those days from a great height.

William Jermyn Florence was born at Albany, New York, in 1831, and, like Brougham, and so many others, found the straight path to his profession through the door which the amateur stage flung open to him. He made his first professional appearance in

New York in 1850 at Niblo's Garden, then under the management of Brougham and Chippendale, in a small part, and, after several seasons of those actors' bugbears, "small parts," he was intrusted with better things. His first real "hit" was made at the Lyceum, still under Brougham's management, in the "Row at the Lyceum."

Mr. Laurence Hutton, in his interesting and valuable "Plays and Players," gives the following account of that performance:

"The curtain rose to a crowded house on a scene at rehearsal, after the manner of Sheridan's 'Critic.' The actors and actresses, in their ordinary street dresses, looking in every respect like the not more than ordinary men and women they really were . . . It was the green-room proper of a theater, with all the green-room accessories and surroundings, the scenes and incidents, concords and discords of a green-room gathering. . . . Mr. Dunn as *Mr. Dunn*, Tom the Call Boy as *Tom*, and Mrs. Vernon as *Mrs. Vernon* were very natural of course, and very funny . . . The audience was thoroughly interested and amused at the realism of the performance, when, 'Enter Mrs. B.' the scene changes, and the 'Row at the Lyceum' begins. While she greets her friends, looks over her part, objects to her business, and lays claim to something more in her line, a stout, middle-aged gentleman seated in the middle of the pit, clothed in Quakerish garb, who had hitherto quietly listened to and laughed with the rest, rises suddenly in his place with umbrella firmly clasped in both hands and held up on a line

with his nose, and to the astonishment of the house, calmly and sedately addresses the stage and the house in words to this effect: 'That woman looks for all the world like Clementina! Her voice is very like — the form the same.' And then with emphasis: 'It is my wife —' at the same time leaving his seat in great excitement, he rushes toward the foot-lights, and cries wildly and loudly, 'Come off that stage, thou miserable woman!'

"The utmost confusion reigned in the theater. The audience, at first amused by the interruption, seeing that the Quaker gentleman was in earnest, soon took sides for or against him, and saluted him with all sorts of encouraging and discouraging cries, as he fought his way toward the orchestra. . . .

"Up in the third tier, in a corner near the stage, in prominent position, visible to all, was one particularly 'gallus' boy — a fireman, red-shirted, soap-locked, with tilted tile, a pure specimen of the now obsolete b'hoy — *Mose* himself. He added greatly to the excitement of the scene, by the loud and personal interest he seemed to take in the proceedings, and promised to give the indignant husband a sound lamming if he ventured to lay a hand on that young 'oman; volunteering if the indignant husband would wait for him to go down and do it then and there; proceeding then and there to go down and do it!

"At this stage of the proceedings, the dramatic performances of 'Green Room Secrets' were entirely stopped. The artists were utterly unable to proceed on account of the uproar in front. . . .

"All this time the irate husband was struggling to reach his wife. He finally climbed over the orchestra, the red-shirted defender of the young woman close behind him, when both were collared by a policeman or two, dragged upon the stage, made to face the house, the regulation stage semicircle was formed behind the footlights, and the epilogue was spoken, the audience beginning to recognize in the efficient policemen the supes of the establishment; in the fire-laddie of the soap-lock and tilted tile, Mr. W. J. Florence; in the indignant husband, Mr. Brougham himself; in the recovered wife, Mrs. Brougham; and to realize that the 'Row at the Lyceum' was a premeditated and magnificent sell."

After this, the conquest of the town was no task, and Florence soon became a favorite. In 1853 he married Miss Malvina Pray, and they shared success together for many years after. They were very successful in a London engagement at Drury Lane, in 1856, and later in a joint starring tour over the United States. In 1863 Florence made his first appearance as *Bob Brierly* in the famous "Ticket-of-Leave Man," which was played for thousands of nights throughout the country. It is in this character that Gladding has chosen to caricature him. As *George D'Alroy* in that rather dreary old play "Caste," he made another hit and started the play on a long career. Mrs. Florence played *Polly Eccles*, and I can imagine her as nothing less than delightful as that breezy and unconventional young lady. "Caste" was followed by "No Thoroughfare" and a revival of "Dombey and

Son" in which he took Burton's old part of *Captain Cuttle*, playing it admirably too. He not only took Burton's part but wore Burton's clothes, iron hook and all; and there is a very good story in connection with this that has n't been often told before. Florence, as every one knows, was a great practical joker, and among his many butts was one Gus Fenno, an actor in the company, who laid himself particularly open to practical jesting as he was a spiritualist. At one of the early rehearsals of "Dombey and Son," when Florence appeared at the prompter's table, he found Fenno there and tremendous rappings sounded. "What is the matter now?" questioned Florence, laughingly. "Burton is here," answered Fenno. "What does he say?" asked Florence. "He says 'Tell that fellow to take my clothes off,'" replied Fenno amid a roar of laughter.

Luckily Florence refused. And with this group of characters, *Obenreizer* (in "No Thoroughfare") *D'Alroy*, *Brierly*, and *Captain Cuttle*, he busied himself mostly during the next few years.

In 1875, he created a new character, however, and one which the theater-goer of to-day knows better than any other. As Mr. Hutton says: "*Bardwell Slote* is destined to walk down to posterity arm in arm with *Rip Van Winkle*, *Joe Bunker*, *Solon Shingle*, *Davy Crockett* and *Colonel Sellers*, the typical stage American of the nineteenth century and Mr. Florence's most enduring character." He was certainly inimitably droll and amusing as the M. C. for the Cobosh District, as was Mrs. Florence in the character of *Mrs.*

General Gilflory. "The Mighty Dollar" had no particular merit as a comedy, but it served the Florences as a peg on which to hang two of their most humorous characters.

It was in 1889 that he joined Jefferson, and in conjunction with Mrs. John Drew gave "The Rivals" and later "The Heir-at-Law." He died in 1891, leaving a host of friends to mourn a genial, honest gentleman, and the stage a loser by the loss of his humorous art.

John E. Owens.



JOHN F. OWENS.

JOHN E. OWENS.

IN that wonderful record of a wonderful life, "The Autobiography of Joseph Jefferson," the author has this to say of a visit to the St. Charles Theater, in New Orleans, during the war, and when he was but a rising young comedian :

"At last he came, and certainly he conquered. As he entered briskly upon the stage, humming a sprightly song, I thought him the handsomest low comedian I had ever seen. He had a neat dapper little figure and a face full of lively expression. His audience was with him from first to last, his effective style and great flow of animal spirits capturing them and myself too, though I must confess that I had a hard struggle even inwardly to acknowledge it.

"As I look back and call to mind the slight touch of envy that I felt that night, I am afraid that I had hoped to see something not quite so good, and was a little annoyed to find him such a capital actor ; in short, I experienced those unpleasant twinges of jealousy that will creep over us during the moments when we are not at our best—though these feelings may occasionally produce a good result. In me, I know,

it stirred up the first great ambition that I remember ever to have felt, and from that night of pleasure and excitement I resolved to equal Owens some day, if I could." Flattering testimony, indeed, from one great comedian to the abilities of another.

John Edward Owens was born in Liverpool in 1824, and was brought when but a child by his parents to this country, where they settled in Philadelphia; and it was in Philadelphia that when but a lad he appeared at the National Theater, then under Burton's management, as a super. It was not long, however, before he became a general utility man, and eventually a valuable member of the stock company, playing engagements both in Philadelphia and Baltimore. It was in the season of 1846-47 that Jefferson saw him at the St. Charles in New Orleans as first low comedian with Mr. and Mrs. Charles Keene and Mrs. James Wallack in the company. He was soon back in Baltimore and Philadelphia, and in "A Glance at Philadelphia," one of those plays of purely local interest, he made an enormous hit as *Jakey*, the fire-laddie — (everybody in those days seems to have made hits as fire-laddies) — and filled Burton's treasury to such an extent that he was able to come over to New York and lease the Chambers Street Theater, which afterward brought him fame and fortune too.

The season of 1851 found him making his first bow to a New York audience. He played *Uriah Heep* in an adaptation of "David Copperfield" at Brougham's Lyceum, a departure from the usual character of his

parts, but undertaken with no less success. He finished the season in New York and then took the play about the country.

It was during a Philadelphia engagement, however, in 1856-57, that the famous "Solon Shingle" first appeared before the public. The play was called "The People's Lawyer" in those days, and was originally in two acts. Owens was so pleased with the part that he carefully elaborated it, rearranged it, and put it on shelf for future use. Meanwhile he was to make a tremendous hit in a part that is entirely associated, by us of to-day, with the genius of Jefferson. He played *Caleb Plummer* in Boucicault's adaptation of "The Cricket on the Hearth" in New Orleans, where he was then managing the Varieties Theater, in 1859. It had the unprecedented run — for those days — of two months, and was always afterwards one of his most popular characters. Six years later, in August, 1865, Owens commenced an engagement at the Broadway Theater, under the management of George Wood. "Solon Shingle" was the after-piece, and before a week had passed his delineation of the old farmer became the sensation of the town. The house was packed nightly, and the catch phrases of the piece became current in the town, and the mere mention of the "bar'l of apple sass" brought a twinkle to every eye. On its hundredth performance, one of the leading papers drew attention to its remarkable run, as follows: "In one hundred days France passed through the throes of two revolutions — lost a king, gained an emperor, and again bowed to a king. In one hundred days Napoleon

left Elba, marched to the throne of France, fought Waterloo, and was conquered. In one hundred nights John Owens fought a fight for popularity single-handed against the hordes of New York theater-goers and conquered them. In one hundred nights the Broadway Theater passed from the position of a concert hall to the height of fashion. We take pleasure in chronicling such victories. 'Solon Shingle' will run additional hundreds of nights, if this great artist chooses." Which shows that the advertising agent of those days was a much milder creature than his modern prototype. At the end of six months — although its popularity had in no way abated — Owens got tired of playing the part and substituted in its stead *Caleb Plummer*, who met with just as cordial a welcome. After the end of the New York season Owens accepted an offer from Benjamin Webster, then managing the Adelphi in London, for an engagement of six weeks, which was afterward extended, and "Solon Shingle" proceeded to amuse the sophisticated society of the English metropolis.

To further chronicle Owens's career would be but to repeat. His position as one of our greatest comedians was assured, and the next twenty years of his life were given up to an appreciative public. In 1882 he played the part of *Elbert Rogers* in "Esmeralda" during its lengthy run at the Madison Square Theater, and afterward on tour. His last appearance in New York was at the Harlem Theater in "Solon Shingle." He was taken ill during that engagement, and practically retired from the stage. He died in 1886.

Francis S. Chanfrau.



F. S. CHANFRAU.

FRANCIS S. CHANFRAU.

IT was at Mitchell's Olympic, Number 444 Broadway, that F. S. Chanfrau, then a youngster of twenty-four, first forced himself prominently before the New York theater-goer, and he held his position for over thirty years. He was a New York boy to begin with, born here in 1824, and raised. He received an ordinary common-school education, and learned the ship-carpenter's trade. "Becoming addicted," as Mr. Ireland quaintly puts it, "to private theatricals," he eventually found his way as a supernumerary to the Bowery Theater, and afterward made quite a little reputation for himself as a mimic. His imitations of Forrest, Booth, and others were excellent, and led on to more important things. He went the round of the New York theaters, gaining a valuable and diversified experience, which enabled him when his opportunity came to seize it. It came on the night of February 15, 1848. Baker, the prompter of the theater, had hurriedly thrown together for his benefit night a piece which he called "New York in 1848," afterward called "A Glance at New York." It was practically the same thing that

Owens did in Philadelphia, the same year, both pieces being localized to suit their native towns. Owens's *Jakey* was a counterpart of Chanfrau's *Mose*, both tough fire b'hoys. Mr. Lawrence Hutton in his "Curiosities of the American Stage" says: "It [the play] had no literary merit and no pretensions thereto; and it would never have attracted public attention but for the wonderful 'b'hoy' of the period played by F. S. Chanfrau — one of those accidental but complete successes upon the stage which are never anticipated, and which cannot always be explained. He wore the 'soap locks' of the period, the plug hat with a narrow black band, the red shirt, the trousers turned up — without which the genus was never seen; and he had a peculiarly sardonic curve of the lip, expressive of more impudence, self-satisfaction, suppressed profanity, and 'general cussedness' than Delsarte ever dared to put in any single facial gesture." A vivid picture, indeed, and one which the reader will recognize in the miniature figure in the left-hand corner of the plate. *Mose* took New York by storm, and the country, too, for that matter, and assured Chanfrau's future. To show the wonderful vitality of the piece, and incidentally of Chanfrau himself, I quote from a letter which he wrote in 1874 to Mr. Joseph N. Ireland. "The original run of 'Mose' in all its modifications ('A Glance at New York' was followed by *Mose* all over the world: 'Mose in California,' 'Mose in a Muss,' 'Mose in China,' and so on) covered three years and six months, a portion of which time the first version was performed for several weeks at two theaters, the Olympic and

the National, in New York on the same night, and for one week within that period at three theaters on the same evening — the two above mentioned, and at the Newark (N. J.) Theater. Altogether, I have given in the twenty-six years which have elapsed since the first presentation of *Mose* something in excess of twenty-two hundred representations of the character. "Respecting 'Sam' I can speak with great confidence. Of that play I have thus far given seven hundred and eighty-three performances. 'Kit,' a more recent but equally prosperous specialty, I have already performed five hundred and sixty times."

Of Chanfrau's *Mose* Mr. Ireland says: "His portraiture was perfect in every particular—dress, manner, gait, tone, action — and the character is as inseparably identified with him as *Paul Pry* with Hilson. *Delph* with Burns, *Jemmy Twitcher* with John Sexton; *Crummles* with Mitchell; *Captain Cuttle* with Burton, or *Our American Cousin* with young Jefferson (young Jefferson!). Mr. Chanfrau's immense success in this character has been somewhat detrimental to his standing in his native city in a more elevated range of the drama; some squeamish connoisseurs insisting that an artist cannot excel in parts dissimilar. The conclusion, however, is unwarrantable and unjust, for his versatility, although unbounded in aim, is almost unequaled in merit, and his name is ever a reliable source of attraction and profit in almost every other city of the Union in a much higher grade of character. Mr. Chanfrau is decidedly handsome, and, divested of the dress and attributes of *Mose*, his appearance and man-

ners are those of a well-bred gentleman, and we are assured that his private life and character are such as to entitle him to the highest respect."

A naive tribute to the character and ability of the man, "squeamish connoisseurs" notwithstanding. Jefferson was not one of these, for he writes of him :

"When I first saw him he was extremely handsome. He was modest, too, and manly. These qualities are so rarely allied to beauty, that Chanfrau comes back to my remembrance as quite a novelty. He had success enough to have turned his head, but he bore it bravely, so that he must have been as well poised in his mind as he was in his person."

Chanfrau married in 1858 Miss Henrietta Baker of Cincinnati, who as Henrietta Chanfrau, holds an important place in the annals of the New York stage.

De Walden's comedy of "Sam," in which he played the title-rôle, was Chanfrau's next important eccentric essay, and its success was enormous. In the plate *Sam* is the little gentleman on the right and he is no other than *Lord Dundreary's* idiot brother. Both *Mose* and *Sam* were long before my theatrical or any other days, but I have thrilling recollections of his "Kit, the Arkansas Traveller," and a wonderful *Kit* he was, full of dash, fire, and intrepidity ; as ready with his "gun" as with his bowie knife, and wreaking a terrible vengeance on the villain. It was the last part he ever played, and he was in the harness till the very last. He died suddenly in Jersey City, leaving his wife and a son, Frank, who is playing *Kit* to this day, I believe, about the country.

Charles T. White and Dan Bryant.



CHARLES WHITE.

CHARLES T. WHITE AND DAN BRYANT.

THE story of Charley White and Dan Bryant is practically the story of negro minstrelsy in New York. White was born in 1821, and from the time he was a mere lad took part in public performances. The first minstrel company in New York was organized in 1843, and the next year White started a company of his own which he called "The Kitchen Minstrels." They opened on the second floor of the building at Broadway and Chambers Street. A biographical scrap of White says: "The first floor was occupied by Tiffany and Ellis, jewellers; the third by the renowned Ottignon as a gymnasium. Here, where the venerable Palmo had introduced to delighted audiences the Italian opera, and regaled them with fragrant Mocha coffee handed around by obsequious waiters, he first came prominently before the public." He afterward, in 1846, opened The Melodeon, at 53 Bowery, and later, White's Athenæum, at 585 Broadway. For many years he was associated as manager or performer with almost every minstrel entertainment in New York: with the "Virginia Serenaders," "The

Ethiopian Operatic Brotherhood," "The Sable Sisters of Ethiopian Minstrels," "The New York Minstrels," and so on. He was instrumental in introducing to the stage Daniel Webster O'Brien, better known as Dan Bryant, probably the most famous minstrel of them all. He was born in Troy in 1833, and when twelve years old made his first appearance in New York at the Vauxhall Garden, as a dancer. From then on he followed the profession of minstrel and comedian, with increasing success and popularity. In 1857, in partnership with his brothers Neil and Jerry, he organized a minstrel company called the "Corkonians," and opened at Mechanic's Hall, 472 Broadway. In July, 1863, he essayed the Irish character of *Handy Andy* at the Wintergarden Theater, and so successfully that he gave up burnt cork for a while, and traveled as a "white" star about this country and England. He returned to minstrelsy, though, in 1868, and played the darky till his death in 1875.

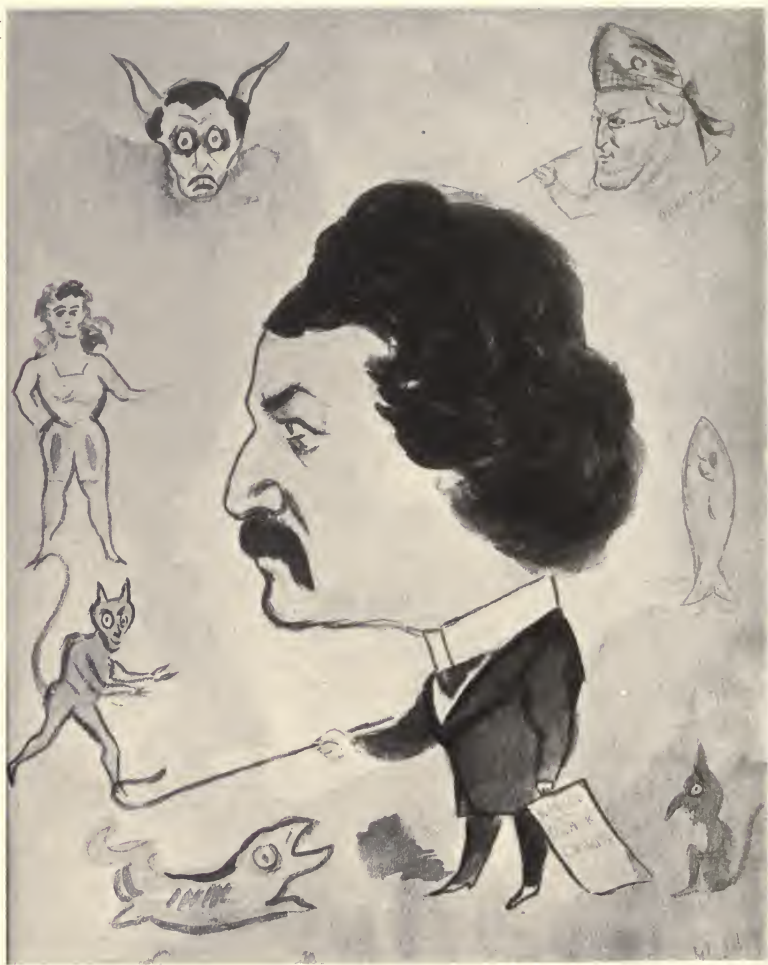
Mr. William Winter, in his "Brief Chronicles," says of him that he "was one of the gentlest and merriest of men, and he passed his life making innocent laughter for everybody and in doing good. Privately and publicly he was a generous, unselfish, genial person. . . .

"He had a droll humour and fine animal spirits, and his Irishmen were natural and interesting."



DAN BRYANT.

William Wheatley.



WILLIAM WHEATLEY.

WILLIAM WHEATLEY.

ON March 9, 1804, a small building in Bedlow Street, New York, was opened as the Grove Theater, with a company of what the chronicler calls "inferior performers." "Of these," he adds, "Mr. Frederick Wheatley must be noticed as the husband and father of a most talented wife and children. He was afterward attached for many years to the Park Theater." This Frederick Wheatley was an Irishman — a Trinity College Irishman — as I have heard him described, who strayed to this country as a player and singer. In 1805 he married a Miss Ross, the daughter of an officer in the British army, who had joined the Park Theater company, and who retired after her marriage to private life, only to enter the lists again later. The chronicler says of her that "severe study, long practice, and the strictest adherence to nature, finally gave her the position she aimed at, and for more than twenty years, in the line of comic, middle-aged old women, rich or poor, refined or vulgar — indeed, of every grade, she was entirely unrivaled on the American stage. Her reputation resulted from the combination of perfect good sense

with accurate discrimination of character, fine artistic taste, an agreeable face and person, and the most thorough executive ability. Becoming independent in her resources, with her daughters handsomely settled in marriage, and her son William enjoying a high professional reputation, Mrs. Wheatley in 1843 finally bade farewell to the stage, and had the nerve to resist the tempting offer of \$1000 for reappearance, for a single night, in the character of *Mrs. Malaprop*. She had passed her eighty-fourth birthday when she died."

This artistic and exemplary lady was the mother, and Mr. Frederick Wheatley was the father, of the subject of this sketch, who, though entirely forgotten to-day, save by the very old playgoer or actor, was in his time a young actor of decided ability, and later a metropolitan manager of note and success.

Mr. Joseph N. Ireland, whose invaluable services to the history of our local stage I can only too poorly acknowledge, gives the record of his stage career as follows: "Mr. Macready appeared as *William Tell* (October 12, 1826), with Master William Wheatley as *Albert*, who attracted much notice by the good judgment he evinced in its performance. He soon afterward appeared as *Tom Thumb*, and for two or three years was the principal representative of the Park juveniles. In 1833 he was at the Bowery in the lowest part of a walking gentleman. In the summer of 1834 he reappeared at the Park in a more elevated range of the same line, and gradually worked his way into public favor by his sensible personations of whatever was intrusted to his care.

“In the long catalogue of characters then assigned to him—such as *Laertes*; *Henry* in ‘Speed the Plough’; *Michael* in ‘Victorine’; *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Charles Courtly*, and *Henry Moreland* in ‘The Heir-at-Law’ (which Charles Kemble did not disdain to play in London),—we do not remember to have seen his equal; while as *Sir Thomas Clifford*, *Alfred Evelyn* and *Claude Melnotte*, he played with a truthful earnestness that quite eclipsed the efforts of more pretending performers. His temperament was scarcely mercurial enough to give due effect to the *Vapids*, the *Gossamers*, and *Dazzles* of light comedy, nor, although he perfectly satisfied the eye as *Hamlet* and *Romeo*, would his rendition of them rank with their first representatives. Mr. Wheatley left the Park Theater in 1843, but fulfilled a star engagement there in 1847, in conjunction with his sister, Mrs. James Mason. He was for several years a resident of Philadelphia, where he played exclusively the highest grades of character, and as actor and manager enjoyed great popularity. (During his sojourn in Philadelphia, he managed the Arch Street Theater in partnership with the elder John Drew.)

“In January, 1862, he reappeared at Niblo’s Garden in conjunction with Mr. and Mrs. J. Wallack, Jr., Mrs. Barrow, and Mr. E. L. Davenport, and soon reinstated himself in the good opinion of his audience, by many of whom he was almost forgotten. In the summer of that year he became sole lessee and manager of that establishment, and still remains there, popular and prosperous, having given it a character for the

production of romantic and spectacular dramas not previously enjoyed by any theater in the city.

"The splendid 'getting up' and success of the 'Duke's Motto,' in which his performance of *Henri de Lagardère* received the most rapturous applause; of the 'Corsican Brothers,' wherein he was equally happy as *Louis* and *Fabien*; of 'Satanella' and the 'Enchantress' with Mr. Richings and daughter; 'Bel Demonio' with Mademoiselle Vestvali; the 'Connie Soogah' with Mr. and Mrs. Williams, and 'Arra na Pogue,' are the best proofs of his judgment, taste, and liberality."

It was during this period of management that the famous "Black Crook" was produced, and it is at this period that the caricaturist has depicted him, surrounded by the goblins, fairies, and supernatural creatures of that supernatural production. He was one of several who made their "everlasting fortunes" out of that successful play, and he was lost to public view in a mist of profits.

Antonio Pastor.



TONY PASTOR.

ANTONIO PASTOR.

AT last a contemporary stares us in the face, and may he continue to do so for years to come! Tony Pastor was born in Greenwich Street, New York, in 1840, and fortunately, is able to tell his own story.

That there is undoubtedly "a divinity that shapes our ends" my life story demonstrates. From my earliest childhood I was possessed with a desire to "strut upon the mimic stage," a desire that at the age of eight found me at the head of a dozen boys managing a penny circus in the back yard of my parents' residence, and before my tenth year appearing upon a real stage and singing as an infant prodigy before a real audience of adults; at fifteen, a full-fledged performer in a circus, and before I attained my majority, a manager and proprietor of amusement ventures.

My father, who was a very skilful musician, was a prominent soloist in a grand orchestra that gave promenade concerts in the Old Castle Garden on the style of the Julien concerts, afterward so famous in Europe and America. He also was for a long time one of the orchestra of the Park Theater in its earliest days, when the life of New York city was all below Canal Street, and Bleecker Street was to the city what upper Fifth Avenue is to-day, and often have I listened with wonder to his narration of events that had come to his notice when he would relate to my mother the scenes at the theater, with bits of chat and gossip of

the society folk who attended, the popular actors, and the exciting plays. All these little bits were working toward my destiny, "this life upon the stage," where I have wrought with more or less success from childhood to manhood, surrounded often by difficulty, rewarded with some triumphs attended with many happy incidents, some sorrows, much that has been of delight, and at length into the pleasanter waters of established favor, where I now glide along thankful to friends, and with a happy, kindly affection for fellows.

My first managerial difficulty came with my first managerial effort. I was then about eight years of age, and was the leader of a dozen boys who organized a theatrical performance to be presented in the cellar of my father's house. Our first proceeding was to pack to one side the winter's fuel, which in those days was principally of wood, coal being as yet a luxury. Then from our mothers' household stores we abstracted sundry quilts, curtains, bits of furniture, and other properties, all of which were quietly conveyed to our theater (the cellar) with great caution, because my father was much at home in the daytime, and would not countenance our transactions. In fact, to him was due the ultimate failure of the project, and the abandonment of our grand company, as will appear later on. Well, having gotten together the needed articles, we constructed a proscenium of clothes-horses and bed-quilts, a drop-curtain purloined from some mother's camphor-chest, a stage built upon upright barrels, and seats of neatly piled cordwood. Then came the great difficulty—the scenery. We could never get along without that, so I decided to sacrifice one of my mother's best linen sheets, and with burnt cork for crayon, I depicted the battlements of an English castle, with a background sadly lacking in perspective.

Our preparations being all complete, we eagerly awaited the coming of Saturday's holiday from school, when we should be able to give our first performance. In due course the time came around, and our audience assembled, paying their admission fee in pins, marbles, and other bric-a-brac usual in boys' barter. Our play was extempore and *Richard III* bore strange resemblance to *Hamlet*, *Nick of the Woods*, and *Schnapps* in the

“Naiad Queen,” while *Ophelia* danced a hornpipe with *Macbeth* or *Falstaff*, I don’t remember exactly which at this time. I sang comic songs, but was compelled to stop in the midst of the strain to caution the boys to suppress their enthusiasm and its attendant noise, for I knew my respected papa would not relish the proceedings should they come to his notice. However, we escaped any trouble from that source, and the following Saturday, emboldened by success, we were less cautious. One of the boys, afterward a well-known actor, was shouting for a horse, the audience were shouting themselves hoarse, when with utter terror I recognized the familiar creak of my father’s boots coming down the stairs. I gave the cue to run, and without disrobing our mimic kings and queens tumbled over the audience in a mad race for the street. The wild scramble so amused my parent that he forgot to be angry, and so I escaped punishment.

At the time of this escapade I was a pupil at the Thames Street school, and at one of our exhibitions received a prize for elocution. My recitation was entitled “You ’d Scarce Expect One of My Age”; and having at that time attracted the attention of some visitors, I was selected to aid in a temperance revival, then in progress at Dey Street Hall, by the Hand in Hand Society, where I made my *début* as a public entertainer, and was launched upon the career that destiny had carved for me.

At the time of which I am writing negro minstrelsy was in its earliest days and a mere skeleton of what it has since become. Minstrel bands then consisted of five or six performers, without orchestra other than the banjo, bones, tambourine, triangle, or jawbone. I had seen the original Virginia Serenaders at the Park Theater, and was ambitious to be an end man, or, as our English cousins term them, “a corner man.” One day I had the good fortune to find on the street a two-dollar bill, which I invested forthwith in a tambourine and a negro wig, made in those days of cloth listing. I soon joined with a party who were giving concerts on the steamboat *Raritan*, Captain Fisher, which then plied between New York city and Staten Island, my object being to gain experience and practice until a better opportunity should offer for presenting my genius to an

admiring public. My next move was to attach myself to a minstrel band then showing at Croton Hall, at Division and Chatham streets. I was not employed, but was rather a volunteer, and used to carry water for the comedian.

At Croton Hall I got an occasional opportunity to display my ability; but my father now interfered and sent me off to the country to "cure me of the nonsense," but my dear parent could not hew out my career in the rough. I was no sooner in the country than I was in full blast as an amateur entertainer, and the whole country grew to know Tony Pastor "the clever boy from New York." My services were in demand for parties and church affairs. On one occasion, while traveling a country road, a young farmer stopped me and caused me to mount a hay wagon and do a song and dance for the amusement of his hay-makers, put a dollar in my hand, and sent me on my way. I soon tired of country life and returned to New York, and my parents, seeing that my inclination could not be diverted, gave up their opposition, and I entered the service of P. T. Barnum at the famous Barnum's Museum, corner of Broadway and Ann streets, where I was regarded as a sort of infant prodigy, and where I attracted the attention of Colonel Alvan Mann, one of the proprietors of Raymond & Waring's Menagerie, who engaged me as an end man,—or rather end boy, as I was not yet fourteen years old,—and I went out into the world at last as a performer; and my dream was at length realized.

Having become a professional performer I soon felt the managerial bee buzzing in my bonnet; and it was not long before I started my first venture in this wise. At that time the menagerie and circus did not perform at night, day performances only being deemed profitable in the country towns. I organized a concert troupe and minstrel show, and would hire a school or courthouse, or the dining-room of the hotel, as the case might be, and announcing the same from the ring in the afternoon, would generally have a good audience to reward us. As the expense generally was at zero the profits were considerable; but the managers of the menagerie did not relish the idea of my making too much money, and they put a stop to my concerts.

Defeated, but not conquered, I purchased a number of illustrated periodicals, and cutting out the pictures, mounted them on muslin strips in panorama style. I started a peep show. This consisted of a box-wagon with small peep-holes in sides and rear, with a tin reflector at the top to throw the light upon the muslin, which gave the pictures a transparent appearance, yet sharply defined. A team of horses, a bass drum, and plenty of red, white, and blue calico completed the outfit; and with this I would take my stand in the market-place, or alongside the menagerie entrance, and with the beating of drum and clanging of cymbals announce "a grand panorama of the world, all to be seen for a sixpence,"—a piece of money now obsolete, but at that time our principal small coin, its value six and one quarter cents, and in the different sections of our country variously termed "sixpence," "fip," and "picayune." Again the current of currency flowed toward my pockets. I became a walking depository of small coin—dimes, half dimes, sixpences, and shillings weighed me down, and I became the Cræsus of our company. But, alas! again the demon of jealousy and avarice was on my track—this time the village constable. I was proclaiming the wonders of my panorama when he came along, and without paying the fee, proceeded to enjoy my show. I demanded payment, which he refused. I protested in vigorous style, when, displaying his shield, he yanked me before the Town Council for doing business without a license. They fined me \$10 for the offense, \$10 for obstructing the roadway, and if I had not kept quiet, would have fined me \$10 more for contempt of court. I pleaded inability to pay, and they confiscated my wagon. I disclaimed ownership of the horses, or they would have kept them also. And thus ended speculation number two.

Defeated in my concerts and my peep show, I cast about for a new effort, and at length induced Mr. George Bunnell, who with his brother was owner of a small snake exhibit with the menagerie, to join me in organizing an annex show given in an extra tent under license from our proprietors, with the snakes and the assistance of Mr. Joseph Hazlett, a violinist, and the two children of Mr. Charles Sherwood, a rider in the big show.

We gave quite a concert, dividing the profits one half to Bunnell, and one quarter each to Hazlett and myself. This was a great success, and I saved my money.

I followed circus life for some years, being successively ring-master, clown, and actor, creating a Yankee part with Levi P. North's circus at Chicago in a horse drama—"The Days of '76." After this I made my appearance in New York at the Old Bowery as a stage clown, in a play called "The Monster of St. Michel's." This was before the advent of George L. Fox, who afterward achieved fame and fortune as a stage clown in the same house. I also appeared at the Bowery in comedy rôles, playing principal comedy in "Tippoo Sahib," a burlesque founded on the Anglo-Indian mutiny. At that time there flourished in the Bowery a social coterie called "The Side-pocket Club"—a number of young men who, being always ready for fun, prevailed upon the stage manager to let them go on as supers for one night only. In the action of the play was a battle between the Sepoys and the British troops, with cannon fired from the back of elephants and other East Indian realism. The British, of course, were the victors; but the Side-pocket boys, led on by Dan Kerrigan, turned the tables, and, as Indians, beat the British army of paid supers, putting them to rout, and driving Joseph Foster, the stage manager, distracted. The battle raged until the curtain was rung down.

In 1861, the mutterings of the trouble that was soon to burst on us with all its awful carnage and woe appalled the proprietors of circuses and menageries, and I sought in the variety theaters the employment that the tented arena gave but little promise of. I sang at Rivers' Melodeon in Philadelphia and later at Butler's American Theater, more popularly known as 444 Broadway, where I remained four years. One afternoon my attention was attracted by the crowds wending their way toward Union Square. I inquired the cause; the dreaded answer came: "The war has begun! Fort Sumter has been fired upon!" Here was the culmination of all the past year's anxiety and apprehension. I mused on the situation, and somehow I did not feel like singing comic songs that night. I went to a music-store and

bought "The Star Spangled Banner." I committed the words to memory, and that night asked the audience to join me in its chorus. Such a chorus and such a cheer as went up at that theater! I never heard its like before; I never shall again. It was enthusiasm. But it was dreadful enthusiasm. It meant war; it meant that which is now history—that struggle for the grand old Union! It meant that those young men would give their blood to wipe out the stain! That the Star-Spangled Banner should not be trailed in the dust!

My experience at No. 444 opened up the idea that in the variety show there was an opportunity waiting for the man—the man who would disentangle it from cigar-smoking and beer-drinking accompaniment, and I determined to make the effort. I laid my plans before my friends. Some shook their heads; others said the idea was good and buttoned their pockets; others enthused only to grow cold soon after, until at length Sam Sharpley, the minstrel manager, joined hands with me, and we made our first bid for lady patronage at Paterson, N. J., on March 21, 1865. Our success was good, but it took a long while to induce the ladies to attend in any considerable number. From Paterson we journeyed to other towns, advertising freely and pledging our reputation that the show should in no sense offend. That has ever been my trademark, and our moderate success became positive, until to-day the variety show no longer is regarded as an outcast, but takes its turn in the best houses of America and enjoys an equal share of the best patronage.

On the night of July 31, 1865, Mr. Sharpley and myself opened at No. 201 Bowery, New York city, "Tony Pastor's Opera House," on the site of the present People's Theater. Mr. Sharpley remained my partner for one season and retired, leaving me with the battle scarcely half won—leaving me sole owner of an idea—an idea I have worked upon, until to-day I am proud to say that I have demonstrated into a fact that the specialty stage is a valuable school to the actor; that its possibilities were greater than even its votaries then believed, and to-day it enjoys not only public favor, but popular distinction, while its foster child, farce comedy, is now the public furore.

I remained in the Bowery ten years, going thence to Nos. 585 and 587 Broadway, where I remained six years, and finally to my present location in Fourteenth Street, where I have been for nine years.

In my career I have always endeavored to extend encouragement to the young artist. On my stage many estimable actors and actresses who now soar high in the dramatic firmament have first tried their wings. The list is too well known to require mention here. Suffice it to say I have always tried to nourish budding talent; to say, "Well done, my boy!" or "Bravo, lassie!" and thus cheer them to braver efforts; and I have reaped the reward. In the hundreds I could name there is not one who has proved ungrateful — a noble record for a noble profession.





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